

Introductory thoughts on a moot rhythm of life

At the heart of a rhythm of life is the desire to know and to follow Christ wherever you are. For us, as moot, that means in the busy city of London, with all the many and various challenges that presents.

In this busy city it is easy to see our Christian spirituality as a part of our life, a Sunday affair. However, as a community, living this rhythm helps us to see God in every moment of life, and to hear the voice of the Spirit beckoning us to come and follow in the footsteps of where God already is at work, beckoning us to join in. In that sense it is also a call to mission, in bringing the good news to this broken and fragmented world.

Living a rhythm helps us as a community to allow people to shift from being consumers of church, or spiritual tourists, into being pilgrims, and partakers in the body of Christ. It also allows people to easily journey with us, so they can belong without necessarily believe – in that way we become a fluid community with the rhythm as our centre.

As a community we have been inspired by those great Saints that have gone before us: St Benedict and St Francis, whose vision for Christian community are the foundation of the monasticism movement, and the great wanderers Aiden and Cuthbert, reminders to us that a life spent pilgrimaging towards God is also a life spent pilgrimaging with those around, both inside the cloister and outside it, for we journey together not in isolation.

It would be easy for us to get bogged down by the enormous amount of detail that we could go into in writing a rhythm of life, but this is a danger that we want to avoid. A rhythm of life should be exactly that, a rhythm, not a full concerto with every instrument written up, but rather the background beat that keeps everything else in order, that calls things back on track when they deviate, that reminds us of the type of music we are wanting to play, or perhaps more accurately, what type of lifestyles we are wanting to lead.

Simplicity is the key, the rhythms of life that have worked, and continue to work are those that are easily understood and grasped, this does not mean they are simplistic. The simplicity means that it is far easier to work them into everyday life, as they are easy to memorise. Most rhythms can be reduced to just a few words, behind which lie the core ideas and hopes of the community.

Most rhythms of life can also be seen in part as a reaction against something, the monastic

vows of poverty, chastity, obedience were a clear reaction to money, sex and power – issues that had begun to dominate the Church from the time of its alignment to the state in the 3rd century AD. Monks were those who sought to rid themselves of these temptations and instead choose a life dedicated to following in the way of Christ.

For the Northumbria community availability and vulnerability are their two simple ‘rules’. They were a reaction to the way in which many people hid their true selves from even their closest friends, and were unable to be vulnerable, instead preferring to live life essentially on their own. The Northumbria communities emphasis on being available to others to listen to them and allow them to share with you and the emphasis on being vulnerable in trying to be honest with each other are reactions against this privatisation of life. This didn’t mean forcing people to share with each other, but rather that each person desired to live a life that was open to the wisdom of others, and that they desired to create relationships with people where they could be open and honest with each other.

For us we may be wanting to react against consumerism, individualism, greed and the cult of celebrity etc...

Over the following pages there is the moot rhythm of life, based around what we as a community shared with each other in February 2005, as well as thoughts that came out of meetings since then. Emerging out of all those conversations are the things that we value most about moot, what we find most helpful for our Christian journey. These have now been grouped under a few headers, with an explanatory paragraph underneath. Over the course of 2005 and 2006 the community explored and discussed each of these elements and finalised the descriptive text. What follows is the result of this work.

Our prayer, as a community, is that our rhythm would help sustain and nourish us, as we seek to follow Christ into the hustle and bustle of our city, London.

Pax Christi tecum

Gareth Powell

On behalf of the moot community

5th September 2006

We live the moot rhythm of life through presence, acceptance, creativity, balance, accountability and hospitality

presence

We commit to journeying together with God and each other, by meeting together as a community, in prayer in worship, friendship, grief, and happiness. Being a hopeful sign of an open community in the city rather than just a group of individuals or anonymous people.

acceptance

We desire to accept both ourselves and other people as they are, and to allow people to say what they believe without fear of judgment. We want to create a safe space where people feel at home and welcomed. We hope to learn from all those in and outside the community.

creativity

We want to have an open approach to how we learn, live and encounter God in the plurality of our city and the world. We wish to be creative in our worship, in prayer, in our lives, in learning, and with the Christian tradition, in our theology and with the arts.

balance

We aspire to live with integrity in the city, striving as a community for balance between work, rest and play. We wish to develop healthy spiritual disciplines such as daily prayer, meditation and contemplation, drawing on the ancient Christian paths. We want to live within our means, living sustainable lives. We desire to not be simply consumers, but people committed to giving and receiving in all of life.

accountability

Within the rhythm of life we desire to be accountable to one another, to grow and journey together, listening to each other and the wider Christian community for wisdom rather than trusting only ourselves. We want to have a willingness to share life, rather than to privatise it and we seek to walk together in a deep way rather than as strangers who only know the surface of each other.

hospitality

We wish to welcome all whom we encounter, when we are gathered and when we are dispersed, extending Christ's gracious invitation to relationship, meaning and life in all its fullness.